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ABSTRACT

This report tells the story of the inception and growth of the Gender Project of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension (UMCE) (Sanford, Maine) and shares the results of an evaluation study of program impacts on the lives of individuals, families, and communities over the past six years. Information in the report can guide the growth and expansion of educational programs and services statewide as funding sources are sought to support these new efforts. The report explains that in 2000/2001 the Gender Project presented workshops (n=35) for participants (n=550+) and that its vision is not to continue the battle of the sexes but to understand gender differences and explore how people can stay connected through those differences. The report is divided into 16 sections: (1) "Vignettes"; (2) "Introduction"; (3) "Background"; (4) "Literature Review"; (5) "Program Evaluation"; (6) "Design and Justification"; (7) "Data Analysis"; (8) "Reliability and Validity"; (9) "Findings"; (10) "Conceptual Learning"; (11) "Increased Awareness of Gender Socialization"; (12) "Integration and Behavior Change"; (13) "Personal and Institutional Barriers to Change"; (14) "Participant Recommendations"; (15) "Conclusions: References" (n=23); and (16) "Appendices" (five documents). (BT)

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
Cooperative Extension

Raising Awareness and Changing Behaviors: An Evaluation of the Gender Project

York County Office of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension

SO 034 973

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February 2002

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Vignettes

Gale

Gale, in her mid thirties, works as an English teacher in an Adult Education program. She uses Gender project video discussions as a prompt for writing assignments for her students who she describes as 17 to 21 years old and mostly female. Gale reports that the films have been helpful in moving her students from their entrenched realities to be able to discuss issues of gender socialization. Through journaling assignments, Gale asked each student to pay attention to how they feel after seeing media messages for about a week. She feels this information brought to the forefront her ability to give feedback. Instead of trying to lead students, she began to focus on being an advocate to help them better understand their choices. She helps them with increasing awareness of stereotypes and cultural socialization and ultimately they make up their own minds.

When asked about how her new gender awareness has affected her in her personal life, Gale reported that it has deeply influenced her parenting style. She always considered herself aware of girls' gender socialization issues and had read *Reviving Ophelia*. She felt she had been aware of cultural pressures on her daughter. However, she noticed something unidentifiable 'going on' with her son. The male issues crystallized for her when she saw the video, *Tough Guise, Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity."* As Gale expressed it, "I had not thought about it (gender issues) for my son. As a family, we talk about boys' issues now----how hard it is to be a boy today. I had always talked about pressure on girls, but I had not talked with both of them about pressures around being a boy. I talk about everything more now. I am more open to dialogue".

Darren

Darren, also in his thirties, works with teen parents. After viewing the video, *Tough Guise, Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity,* at a train the trainer workshop he reports that he struggled with his personal gender socialization issues right away. Darren's comment, "*Tough Guise"* was good! It brought home personal issues of aggression within my family history for me and other males who were present. I saw a lot of myself and the way I was raised in that film. It made me think about anger and the way men deal with it. It pointed out men's' personal struggles."

After dealing with his initial emotions, Darren looked toward his work with young fathers (17 and 18). His new realization brought to a head that the young men's emotional range was limited by the culture in which they live. These young fathers grew up in chaotic situations and all of them have anger management issues, some are involved in the legal system. Darren says he began to integrate his new information in a general way. He reported that some of the young men could be vulnerable, but not most. "There is so much confusion around what is masculine. A lot of men are confused. I try." Darren said.

On a community level Darren tries to model behavior other than stereotypical male posturing. He says he tries to be different and talks about emotions with other men. He believes that relationships are the most important component. In a nutshell, that men must start talking to other men.

Felica

Felica is a parent who was so anxious to be interviewed by telephone for the Gender Project Survey that she called the interviewer at home on a Sunday night. As the parent of a twelve-year-old female and thirteen-year-old male, she attended both the Reviving Ophelia and the Tough Guise video discussion workshops. She had a lot to say.

There were several GED diploma students attending the workshops who, because of their life circumstances, gave diverse perspectives to the consequences of their life choices during the lively discussions that followed the films. Felicia commented that after listening to those young women, "It made me look through new eyes. It is not about looking at it with adult eyes, it is about looking at it (gender) through the child's eyes. I have a different sense of identity. I don't judge kids so harshly anymore."

Felicia, acting as leader of her daughter's Girl Scout Troop, planned a trip to a program at Lewiston High School where the young scouts could listen to a panel of teenage mothers talk about how difficult it is to raise babies while trying to complete their high school education. These young mothers gave straightforward information about birth control and encouraged the scouts to wait to have a baby until they were older. Felicia explains her new realization, "I had been so judgmental before. The gender project has given me a new understanding that these girls need respect. They just want to be understood. Weeks later I saw one of the young women from the local Tough Guise workshop on the street and she came up to me and told me she had completed her GED. She was so proud, and it gave me an opportunity to affirm her hard work."

But Felicia didn't stop there. She reported that recently she has been making a point of creating connection with some of her son's friends. One young boy's mother left the family a few months earlier and his father is working long hours. He hangs out at her home every day with her son. Felicia says she treats him like family, gives him a job and has him stay to dinner. Soon another boy, whose mother has recently remarried, has begun spending lots of time at her home. "He doesn't get along with his stepdad. I reinforce connection and lots of trust. I don't interfere with the families, but I provide a safe place for these boys to talk about their feelings. I don't know if I would have seen their symptoms before seeing the Tough Guise video" Felicia reports.

Introduction

This report tells the story of the inception and growth of The Gender Project of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension (UMCE) and shares the results of an evaluation study of program impacts on the lives of individuals, families and communities over the past six years. This information will guide the growth and expansion of educational programs and services statewide as we seek funding sources to support these new efforts.

Background

Cooperative Extension, established by the federal government in 1914, is a part of the Land Grant University in each state. The mission of Cooperative Extension is to extend the research and resources of the university throughout the rural areas of the country. Stated simply, it is to put knowledge to work for people. UMCE addresses contemporary individual and community issues through community-based education, delivered in a variety of informal ways that are applicable to the everyday lives of people. Historically, these programs were for farmers, homemakers, and young people (in 4-H clubs). Extension education has continued through the years in the areas of agriculture and natural resources, nutrition and health, and parenting and youth development.

In 1982, Aileen Fortune began as an extension faculty member teaching family skills including parenting and child development. In her early work with displaced homemakers, she used the perspective of adult development and empowerment to help women develop self-confidence as well as the practical skills they needed to return to the workplace. During a sabbatical leave in 1994-95, Fortune studied the research on gender socialization to bring greater focus and depth to county parenting programs. Having both a young son and daughter gave her a powerful personal resource of attention to these issues as she often reflected on who they were, the gendered nature of their lives and the cultural environments in which they were growing. The sabbatical leave also provided many opportunities to be an anthropologist of sorts, volunteering in classrooms and on field trips, and observing the culture for both girls and boys and how our definitions of masculinity and femininity both support and limit our young people in different ways as they grow. She talked with parents and teachers about their hopes and the different concerns they had about their sons and daughters. They were eager to explore and reflect on the impact of gender in their lives and work as well.

Returning to work, Fortune began to look at child development through the focusing lens of gender and developed new programs. Staff went to middle school classrooms with the discussion question, "How would your life be different if you had been born the opposite sex?" The discussions were rich and the results were compelling. It seemed that the more gender was made visible in people's lives, the more they wanted to talk. And the more they talked and listened to each, the more they understood each other across their differences. Young people were then able to notice stereotypes and explore new ways to support themselves and each other. The Gender Project was born.

The Gender Project began as a York County initiative in 1995, to provide educational support and assistance to individuals and groups addressing gender socialization and

equity issues, and developing strategies to create changes in their communities. It has grown with increasing community parent programs, staff development training for teachers and agency staff, and on-going newsletters and publications. Staff grew when Christine Burgess joined the project in 2001 and other Extension faculty joined in gender programming around the state.

Program Description

The ultimate goal of The UMCE Gender Project is to support both boys and girls in developing a full repertoire of skills so that they will be happy and successful in their varied adult roles. Staff often describes this as raising whole children and holds the philosophy that we must move beyond a 'battle of the sexes' approach to education around gender issues. Males and females, families and communities all benefit from the support of wholeness in our young people.

The Gender Project integrates research from many fields including education, gender studies, human development, anthropology and psychology to guide people in the exploration of gender issues today. Parents, teachers, coaches, neighbors, and youth volunteers are concerned about issues of bullying, violence, eating disorders, body image, media influence, school achievement and high-risk and/or unhealthy decision making in young people associated with alcohol, drugs and sex. The Gender Project looks at these complex issues through the lens of gender by exploring the relationships between these critical issues and the messages girls and boys receive about what it means to be male and female in our culture. They explore how definitions of masculinity and femininity both support and limit young people in getting all they need.

The Gender Project is about sharing information, teaching skills and supporting people who are taking action. It is also a community development and capacity building program. The Gender Project is unique in this combination of community education and community development. The heart of the work however, is the intrapersonal processes, as well as the networking and connection that takes place within groups as adults come together to learn new ways to support young people.

The Gender Project assists individuals and groups in developing strategies to create positive changes in their homes, schools and communities to reach their goals. The ***Gender Project NEWS currently reaches 544*** and is mailed increasingly to interested people outside York County. ***In 2000/2001 The Gender Project presented 35 workshops for over 550 participants.*** Many of these programs were offered in collaboration with adult education programs, girl scouts, and other parent support organizations. A variety of 'train the trainer' programs were offered at school district teacher workshops, professional conferences for counselors, foster parents, and agencies working with domestic violence issues. (See **Appendix A.**)

The Gender Project is much more than its gender socialization contents. It is about sharing information, teaching skills and supporting people who are taking action. It has become a community development and capacity building program. The heart of the work is the personal processes and the networking and connection that takes place within

groups. The Gender Project staff acknowledges and supports the personal work adults do as they come together to learn to support young people.

The Gender Project's vision is not to continue the "Battle of the Sexes", but to understand gender differences and explore how people can stay connected through those differences. Moving forward in an intentional and inclusive way through the promotion of gender mutuality would mean appreciating our connection across any differences.

A Brief Review of Relevant Literature

On a national level, the Gender Project is responding to extensively documented social and personal issues around gender bias and stereotyping. Many recent popular books, such as *Reviving Ophelia*, and *Raising Cain*, speak to issues around gender. In 2001, actress Jane Fonda donated $12.5 million to the Harvard Graduate School of Education to sponsor the new Center on Gender and Education. Although there is considerable publicity and attention toward issues of gender, teachers are still found to be influenced by traditional gender roles when teaching and assessing student work (Hyde & Jaffee 1998, Peterson & Bainbridge 1999, and Tiedemann 2000).

Many studies have been conducted that explore the social construction of gender and issues like gender and the media, and gender and success (Lorber & Farrell 1991). The media remains a large force in gender stereotyping construction (Coltrane & Messineo 2000). A number of researchers have looked at how gender is constructed in schools through gender hierarchies and gender privilege (Arnot 2000, Bernstein 1972, and Connel 1997). Some studies have looked explicitly at how language, power, and gender remain intertwined in schools (Gallas 1997, Reay 2001). The power of social versus personal construction of gender stereotypes has been argued to support the continued gender imbalance in some fields, such as mathematics (Watt 2000).

Given social changes such as the civil rights and women's liberation over the past few decades, there could be a false sense of security regarding student's perceptions of gender roles and stereotypes. For example, many teachers assume that the students they work with have adopted flexible attitudes toward female gender roles. One study found the 90% of teachers surveyed in a Midwest school believe that adolescents have a more flexible attitude toward gender roles than older groups of people (Mills & Mills 1996). When they surveyed students, however, these researchers found that adolescents were not, in fact, any more flexible regarding their attitudes toward female gender roles than older generations. Mills & Mills conclude be arguing that there is a "disturbing gap between what teachers believed about students' attitudes toward female gender values and what students actually believed" (1996, p. 746). Other studies corroborate this finding that children are still learning many old lessons of gender relations that work against gender equity (Reay 2001). People are often unaware of the extent of occupational segregation by gender and our society, and they underestimate the size of wage gaps (Beyer & Finnegan 1997).

Educators and researchers repeatedly highlight the need for changes in schools regarding gender issues. Educators are asked to raise their awareness of gender issues and to

actively challenge gender stereotypes in the school environment (Gold, Rotter, Holmes & Motes 1999, Mills & Mills 1996, and Wood 2000). Although there is a call for curricular and pedagogical responses to gender issues, the educational and programmatic response is sparse. Although the literature, both popular and academic, clearly identifies problems, there are few, if any, programmatic responses, such as the Gender Project, in the United States.

Program Evaluation

The primary goal of this internal evaluation was to respond to Gender Project program staff-developed questions. This evaluation aimed to provide feedback for the program to help it reflect on what is working well, or their "best practices", and where some changes might be warranted. In addition, it will serve as a formative evaluation to assist the program's staff in identification of goals for the future of the project. The evaluation team consisted of University of Maine Cooperative Extension (UMCE) Gender Project staff Christine Burgess and Aileen Fortune. Desi Larson, a professor from the University of Southern Maine (USM), with extensive evaluation experience, provided external review and advice.

Overall Design and Justification

The evaluation of the Gender Project was designed and implemented by Gender Project staff Christine Burgess and Aileen Fortune, using a participatory and responsive evaluation model. Participatory evaluation is conducted by key stakeholders and is designed to be responsive to programs needs (Aubel 1995 and Cousins & Earl 1992). The goal of responsive evaluation is to conduct an evaluation that responds to the needs of the program (Stake 1993). In addition, participatory and responsive evaluations aim for utility. To promote validity of the design, data collection, and analysis, the evaluation team, which consisted of Gender Project staff and an external evaluator, met at regular intervals during development and implementation. The evaluation questions that framed this endeavor were based on short term and long-term impacts for participants and program improvements:

1. Are participants satisfied with Gender Project activities?
2. What are participants learning and how is their behavior changing as a result of participation in Gender Project activities?
3. How can the Gender Project program be improved?

A three-phase approach to data collection was implemented, as presented in Table 1. In October a University of Maine Cooperative Extension (UMCE) Employee Email Survey was conducted as a follow-up for participants in a training program. Four employees responded to this survey. Methodologically, this evaluation was a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Multiple methods, including instruments specifically designed for this evaluation were used to collect information for this evaluation. These included: 1) telephone survey interview, 2) mail survey, 3) focus group interview, and 4) an email survey.

An initial meeting with Desi Larson, Professor at University of Southern Maine, Aileen Fortune, University of Maine Cooperative Extension Faculty Member and Christine Burgess, University of Maine Cooperative Extension Gender Project Professional was held November 20, 2001 to discuss collaboration on this study. The three met again March 4, 2001 to design the instruments. Desi Larson and Christine Burgess then met on a monthly basis to discuss the process and progress of gathering gender project survey data. Using electronic mail to discuss questions and raw data between meetings proved to be another valuable and effective timesaving tool. **Appendix B** provides an overview of evaluation activities.

Table 1: Data Collection Methods

Phases	Dates	Participants
Phase 1: Survey Mailed to 380 people on the Gender Project News mailing list, 79 responded, a 21% response rate.	May – June 2001	79
Phase 2: Telephone Interview with survey respondents who indicated that they were willing to be interviewed	July 2001	18
Phase 3: Focus Group Interview of Strengthening Voice workshop participants (8) and email survey of UMCE employees (8)	October 2001	16

Seventy-nine of those who received the mail survey responded. Of those who responded, 87% were female. All respondents reported receiving the Gender Project Newsletter. Respondents were asked to identify themselves as "volunteer," "parent," "professional," and/or "youth." Table 2 presents the breakdown of those responses. Some respondents were able to choose more than one category. Most respondents identified themselves of professionals, and 34% identified themselves as parents.

Survey respondents were asked if they would agree to a follow-up interview. Eighteen agreed and were interviewed over the telephone. In addition to those 18 interviewed, a focus group interview was conducted which included 8 participants from a Strengthening Voice workshop.

Table 2: Survey Respondents, n=79

Category	Percent
Professional	78%
Parent	34%
Volunteer	8%
Youth	8%

Survey respondents were also asked to identify how they have connected with the Gender Project. Responses are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Ways of Connecting with the Gender Project
Survey Responses, n=79

Interaction with Gender Project	Percent
I receive the Gender Project News	100
Attended workshops	80
Borrowed resources and films from the Gender Project	23
Invited Gender Project staff to do a program in my community.	20
Consulted with Gender Project staff to design a program in my community.	16

Each respondent indicated that they attended at least one workshop. The breakdown for workshop attendance is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Gender Project Workshops Attended
by Survey Respondents, n=79

Workshop	Percent
Tough Guise Video/Discussion	41
Reviving Ophelia Video/Discussion	32
Killing Us Softly III	11
Support Girls to be Strong, Smart, and Confident	11
Mother/Daughter Body Image Workshop	9
Gender Socialization and Equity Issues	8
Strengthening Voice Workshop	6
Raising Relational Boys	5
Heroes, Growing Up Female and Strong	4
Gender Strategies in the Classroom	3
Boys Night Out	1

The focus group respondents had all completed a Gender Project workshop prior to the interview. The UMCE employees who were interviewed had professional connections with the Gender Project and integrated it into their own work.

Data Analysis
Data were gathered from a variety of sources to inform this evaluation. Much of it was qualitative, in the form of interviews and review of program documents. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics methods. Correlation and regression analyses were performed on survey data to evaluate to what degree gender and self-identified position (professional, volunteer, parent or student) had on the types of activities respondents reported participating in. Based on this analysis, there was no significant difference between different self-identifications and how people responded to the survey. That is to say, those who self-identified as professionals did not respond to

the survey in a manner significantly different from those who self-identified as parents, volunteers, or youth.

Reliability and Validity

Given the nature of this evaluation (responsive, participatory, and reliant on qualitative data), constructivist criteria for judging data quality are appropriate. Nationally recognized evaluators Guba and Lincoln propose that: ". . . the determination of credibility can be accomplished only by taking data and interpretations to the sources from which they were drawn and asking directly whether they believe -- find plausible -- the results. This process of going to the sources -- often called 'member checks' -- is the backbone of satisfying truth-value criterion" (1989, p. 110). Techniques engaged to promote credibility of data and data analysis included member checks and peer debriefing (after Guba and Lincoln 1989, pp. 236-239). Triangulation is one method used to assure the validity of findings presented here. Responses from the surveys and interviews corroborate and reinforce each other, strengthening both the reliability and validity of the findings.

Findings

Data analyzed to inform the findings regarding impacts for Gender Project participants emerged from primarily qualitative data gathered through the mail survey, telephone interview, focus group interview, and UMCE employee email surveys. The telephone interview, focus group, and email surveys all asked questions that encouraged respondents to respond in more depth regarding learning (at the professional and personal levels), barriers, and suggestions for the Gender Project. Surveys and interview questions are available in **Appendix C** of this report. **Appendices D**, **E**, and **F** include the telephone interview guide, e-mail survey, and focus group interview guide respectively.

The findings described below are the result of analysis of survey, interview, and focus group data. After data were analyzed, key themes were identified using the constant comparative method of qualitative data analysis. Themes are based on analysis of responses and are presented based on categories established in the interview and survey protocols (see Table 5). Two open-ended items on the mail survey produced many responses related to learning and behavior changes. These questions were: "The two most important things I have learned are…" and "As a result of participating in Gender Project activities, I…" The survey also asked "What recommendations do you have for the future of the Gender Project?" Responses under this item fell into the "recommendations" category. The "barriers" data were collected from follow-up interviews.

Table 5: Categories and Emergent Themes

Categories	Themes
Conceptual Learning	Culture's influence on gender stereotypes Have a new framework for appreciating differences and similarities of boys and girls Personal learning
Awareness	Awareness of media's effect on gender socialization More informed about gender issues More confidence about knowledge of gender issues Became aware of personal issues with own gender socialization
Integration/Behavior Changes	Share gender information with family, friends, community Have more informed and thoughtful dialogue about gender issues Personal growth Professional interactions with gender changed
Barriers (Personal and Institutional)	Intensity of the work Personal gender socialization/Internal barriers Status quo Institutionalized sexism Lack of support
Recommendations	Expand program to reach more people Market programs and resources more Advocate for more funding and legislative support Increase training Integrate into school curricula

Conceptual Learning

All survey respondents who completed the open-ended question portion of the survey (63/79) indicated that their participation in Gender Project activities had contributed to their knowledge (Table 6). Most respondents indicated that they had learned more about media's effect on gender socialization. Survey respondents also indicated that they learned about how children are socialized to fit our culture's gender stereotypes. A number of respondents expressed optimism and hope as a result of their participation in the Gender Project:

> "Our society focuses too much on gender [roles/stereotypes], but it is a cycle that can be broken." "We can make a difference by spreading the word and increasing awareness."

One third of the respondents indicated that they had learned new behaviors. According to Kristin[1], a survey respondent:

> "We are all impacted by gender issues, males and females. The more we are aware of these issues the more we are able to arrest the destructive patterns of stereotyping and highlight the benefits of gender equity."

Table 6: Types of Learning
Survey, n=63

Type of Learning	Percent
Am more aware, understanding and sensitive of gender issues	45%
New awareness of media's effect on gender socialization	41%
Children are still socialized to fit gender stereotypes in this culture	35%
Specific new behaviors	35%
Personal learning and growth	14%

Increased Awareness of Gender Socialization

Forty-one percent of the survey respondents and 56% of those interviewed emphasized their increased awareness of gender issues. Pete, a survey respondent indicated that he is more aware of "the violence in my life and strategies to change." Another respondent reported that he had learned "How our society actually promotes aggressive behavior through advertisements and movies." Most respondents indicated that they had gained a new awareness of the media's effect on gender socialization. Gina, also a survey respondent, indicated that she had "learned the subtleties of the media and culture, and the ways it influences our attitudes." Jack reported that his experience with the Gender Project "helped me to better understand my own childhood and evolution since, and that of my children. I notice my own (and others' with whom I come in contact), gender socialization more, which helps me get out of old boxes and learn new behaviors, and help others do the same."

Forty-five percent of the survey respondents indicated that as a result of participation in the Gender Project, they were more aware of gender issues, particularly society's roles. Several (40%) of those interviewed said that as a result of their participation, they more actively resist gender stereotyping. Kyle, a survey respondent, reported that he is "more aware of the pain and woundedness that I and other males carry, as a result of socialized roles, and that of women who have equally damaging burdens." Representative responses from the surveys and interviews include:

> "I have learned more about being male, and more about parenting both a daughter and a son, helping with their development as whole people."

[1] This is not her real name. Except for the program administrators and evaluators, all names used in this report are pseudonyms, to protect the identity of survey respondents and interview participants.

"I am more aware of our society's role in promoting aggression"
"I look at advertisements more closely and point out sexist ads to family and friends to spark discussion."
"In addressing gender equity we liberate both genders."
"Awareness of gender issues in my personal relationships"
"Heightened awareness of personal gender socialization and how it has affected life choices."
"Increased personal understanding of gender issues in family."
"Able to identify signals that young girls are hiding giftedness. I've learned to look beyond 'silliness' and to encourage girls more."

Integration and Behavior Change

Learning to Dialogue about Gender Issues - One third of those interviewed indicated that they increased or changed their communication and/or dialogue regarding gender. Several survey respondents also indicated that their participation in the Gender Project heightened their attention to communication. Representative responses included:

"Keep communication open--silence will kill. Be a good listener without judgement."

"It is never too early to start discussing these things. This is not a hopeless cause and we as parents can counteract some of the media influence on kids."

"Get boys in action doing, and then get them talking. Ask questions; tell about your own childhood stories. Give girls more opportunities to voice opinions verbally and in writing."

Changing Behaviors - As indicated in Table 5, 35% of the survey respondents indicated that they had learned specific new behaviors as a result of their participation in the Gender Project. Table 7 provides an overview of the specific types of behavior changes that respondents reported on the survey.

Table 7: Reported Changes in Behavior
Survey, n=79

As a result of participation, I ...	Percent
Shared resources with others	58%
Have taken an action or changed behavior	50%
Have borrowed resources from the Gender Project	23%
Invited Gender Project staff to speak	20%
Consulted with Gender Project staff	16%

The focus group interview respondents, who had participated in a Gender Project Strengthening Voice workshop, reported effects of participation specific to the content of their workshop. For example, when asked about what awareness was awakened by the workshop, participants reported that they were "taking better care of myself," "owning

my power," "owning my spirituality," and an awareness that "I had been living in an approval seeking mode." Nina said that "I couldn't speak my own truth, I didn't know what it was" before participation in the workshop. Irene, another focus group member said that she was "awakened to a pathway to voice and knowledge, a great deal of me opened up."

Sharing information - Most respondents reported that they have shared Gender Project information with family, friends, and community in a variety of ways. Respondents also report that they participate in more informed dialogue about gender issues within their families and professionally. One respondent wrote that she has developed "productive ways to frame the gender socialization question without polarizing men or women." Other responses included:

> "I am having more discussion with both my son and daughter about gender issues and concerns."
> "I use improved language in my classes and have a better understanding of the societal disservice we do to both genders."
> "I have initiated two separate PTO meetings discussing gender issues."
> "I am more aware and thoughtful. It affects my teaching and parenting. I try to share ideas with others."
> "I incorporate information on media influence into my teaching."

A third of those interviewed indicated that they regularly use Gender Project materials as a resource and incorporate information into teaching.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they have shared resources with others. If so, how have they shared those resources and with how many people? Fifty-eight percent, or 46, respondents indicated that they have shared information with others. Based on those respondents and their estimates of how many people they have shared information with, these 46 people estimate that they have shared Gender Project information with 3,091 people. Ways that people report sharing information include:

- Sharing Gender Project printed material and newsletter,
- Sharing Gender Project video materials,
- Informal communication and sharing with families and colleagues,
- Formal meetings: PTO, school staff meetings,
- Community organizations and institutions, such as the Healthy Communities Coalition, Young Women's League, church religious education staff,
- Formal sharing with students: including adult education diploma students, college students, high school students, and
- Formal presentations, training and reports.

UMCE employees surveyed also described several ways they incorporated Gender Project material into their own work. One 4-H Youth Development Educator says he is

"working toward making about a third of my program time to be about the Gender Project." He reports that he has "been doing increasing amounts of Gender Project programming. . . including 'Tough Guise' video discussions with PTO's."

Respondents who participated in the telephone interview were asked: ***What have you learned from your experience that you have brought to your community?*** Sixty-two percent of those interviewed indicated that they have been moved to action as a result of participation. Representative responses include "I now volunteer for the Gender Project," "I bring gender awareness into community teaching venues." Half of those who responded indicated that they bring more dialogue to their communities. "I support increased community action and dialogue, am now more involved," and "Increased dialogue with friends" were typical responses to this question.

More informed, thoughtful, and confident dialogue - Participants are more confident in their knowledge base regarding gender issues, and feel supported by the Gender Project in their efforts. Many participants also report being more thoughtful about their language and interactions regarding gender. Survey respondents wrote about ways that they felt the Gender Project had contributed to their personal growth, and how they have more confidence about their knowledge of gender issues. In addition, they said that their participation in the Gender Project helped them develop a new framework for appreciating differences and similarities of boys and girls.

> "I can speak more clearly, confidently on the issues."
> "I am more aware of the need for more conversations in my community about how we socialize children and what our culture values about gender."
> "I am mindful of how I respond to girls and boys in my classes, especially math and science."

Personal learning and growth - Several participants interviewed and surveyed, male and female, discussed how they became more aware of personal issues with their own gender socialization, and how they needed to give attention to their own personal work around gender issues in order to be present for youth. Maria, a survey respondent wrote that one of the most important things she learned was "an awareness of my own gender biases and how my teaching is affected." A number of respondents indicated that, as a result of their participation in Gender Project activities, they want to learn more.

> "I am a stronger more informed champion for my daughter."
> "Increased personal growth around gender issues."

The Strengthening Voice focus group respondents spoke extensively of personal learning and growth, particularly regarding personal empowerment. One participant described how she was "owning my power, not afraid any more." Another respondent described how, after attending the workshop, she was able to confront her boss regarding personal needs around scheduling. "Don't know if I would've had courage before this workshop." Another workshop participant reported that, as a result of her participation she wrote a poem that was published, testified in front of the state legislature, developed a film

project and got an internship. "The personal is political, the political is personal. When you use your voice it becomes political very fast. I developed an awareness that I had things to offer that I didn't know I had."

Personal and Institutional Barriers to Change

Although they were not specifically asked about barriers to implementing what they learned from their experiences with the Gender Project, survey respondents noted several barriers to changing behaviors around gender socialization. As a result of this feedback, people who were later interviewed were specifically asked about barriers. Sixty-three percent of those interviewed identified internal barriers, and 80% identified external barriers to change. Internal barriers included:

- Need for more education,
- Homophobia,
- Fear,
- Internalized oppression,
- Personal gender socialization,
- Language, and
- Isolation.

Some of the external barriers identified included:

- Lack of support,
- Cultural resistance (for example institutionalized sexism, and societal myths of gender equity),
- Negative media pressure,
- Overwhelming scope of gender education work, and
- Time and fiscal resources.

Jack, one of the survey respondents, noted that one barrier for him was "people's attitudes, mostly. Some think this work is silly, unnecessary, emasculating (which they apparently think is a bad thing)." The focus group participants reported similar barriers. Fear was a common response when asked about barriers. Jean, one of the participants, describes coming to the workshop "immobilized by fear." Another described the "constant challenge of holding on to who I am inside" and avoiding "falling into a rut." Rebecca, a survey respondent, says that a barrier for her is "my own conscious and sub-conscious misogyny." Mike describes external and internal barriers to gender education. He notes that his "community is reluctant to talk about these issues," and "my own tendency to revert to old familiar modes, and, not knowing how to effectively address indifference and hostile reactions to these issues in rural community life."

Participant Recommendations

Eight-two percent of the survey respondents commented to the question "What recommendations do you have for the future of the Gender Project?" Half of those respondents urged the Gender Project to expand. Recommendations included:

- Expand the Gender Project to reach more people,
- Market programs and resources more,
- Advocate for more funding and legislative support,
- Increase training, and
- Integrate into school curricula.

Many responses are indicative of participant satisfaction:

> "Do exactly what you are doing. Keep up the excellent work. It is vital!"
> "Keep on spreading the word. Keep reaching out. You are doing good, important work."
> "More, more, more."
> "Keep educating as many folks as possible."
> "Continue with your good work. Call schools, speak to administration and make yourself available to do presentations. Teachers need to hear this!"
> "The information available is very good. I think focusing on getting it out to as many kids and adults as possible. It is important to make it as common and accepted. For instance, women's issues were once considered 'fringe." It needs to become an established part of the collective consciousness."

Clearly, many of these respondents would like to see services expanded. Seventy-two percent of those interviewed felt the same way. Interviewees advise the program to expand and go statewide. As one respondent suggested "Don't stay a secret."
There were some specific suggestions as well, several respondent urged the Gender Project to develop overnight mother/daughter workshops and father/daughter workshops. The Gender Project developed an overnight mother/daughter workshop, which was presented in January 2002. Over half of those interviewed provided specific suggestions, such as:

- Teach a class at the local university,
- Provide intergenerational activities,
- Incorporate women's capacity building into the project, and
- Contact school curriculum coordinators a year in advance about trainings.

Conclusions

Gender Project is Timely and Necessary

Clearly, damaging gender stereotypes and biases still exist in today's culture. Educators and researchers, among others, have long argued that gender education is imperative and necessary. The Gender Project clearly fills this gap at a number of levels. The project provides education, resources, and, perhaps most importantly, support to adults and students who are working with gender issues in their environments.

Promoting Learning

The Gender Project promotes learning. Participants report that they have learned new concepts and have increased awareness around issues of gender. They report that they have new information and a knowledge base from which to draw on. In addition, respondents also report changes in behavior, specifically regarding communication and incorporating gender bias and stereotype awareness into their work and personal lives.

Gender Project Impact

Participants reported impacts of their participation with the Gender Project at three levels: 1) Personal, 2) Professional, and 3) Community. Respondents noted increased personal awareness of gender issues, sometimes painful and overwhelming. This awareness has helped free people from gender stereotypes and basis. Participants report that as they get in touch with their own gender story, and reflect on it, they have an increased awareness of issues. For example, a number of women discussed the perception of regaining voice as a result of their participation, and men discussed an expanded sense of maleness. They noted that their behaviors changed at home and at work. They also reported increased networking with others, a sense of working toward changing communities and the world, albeit incrementally.

Support

Many of those interviewed reported that once they gain awareness around issues of gender, they can feel overwhelmed by the immensity of it all, particularly given the cultural saturation of gender biases and stereotypes. For this reason, UMCE's Gender Project provides a clear support for people on personal and professional levels. Cooperative Extension is well placed in the community and has a long history of community development. This is evident in the Gender Project's capacity building and community development approach to this project. As the project's director notes, "Gender work is courage work."

Implications

This study clearly shows that more gender socialization education is needed locally, but also at the state and national levels at well. The power of this project appears to come from the engaging workshops and personal support that participants receive, as well as the opportunity to talk, share, and reflect.

Commendations

- Participants are satisfied with services received from The Gender Project,
- The project provides resources for professionals and others regarding issues of gender bias and gender stereotyping,
- The project is and sustains a supportive network around issues of gender socialization,
- The project is successful in its goals of teaching skills, sharing information, and providing support to community members on issues of gender socialization, gender bias, and gender stereotyping, and
- Participants report that they learned new concepts, have increased awareness of gender socialization issues, and have integrated what they learned resulting in behavior changes.

Recommendations

- Continue to build local capacity,
- Continue to support collaborations and connections (which would continue to address some of the personal and institutional barriers to gender socialization identified by participants), and
- Expand the program to reach more people. This would include increased marketing, advocating for more funding and legislated support, increased training, particularly with schoolteachers, curriculum directors, counselors, and administrators.

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Appendix A: Gender Project Programs

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Cooperative Extension

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The Gender Project

A local initiative to explore gender socialization and equity issues and help young people get beyond the often unhelpful messages they receive about what it means to be male and female today

Workshops and Community Programs

Gender Socialization and Equity Issues: An Overview

The ultimate goal of parenting, teaching and everything else we do with young people is to support them in gaining all the skills they will need to grow into happy, successful adults. And yet we know that in the differing messages we give them about what it means to be female and male in our culture, they are supported and hurt differently as they grow up. Traditional gender socialization hinders the healthy development of both boys and girls in unique ways by asking them to develop only half of themselves.

How does gender shape our lives? What are the unique needs of boys and girls? How can we support them in getting all their needs met to grow up whole? This workshop will provide an introduction to the research in gender socialization and equity issues, and explore ways we can support both girls and boys to flourish.

Supporting Girls to be Smart, Strong and Confident

Gender equity discussions have focused our attention for many years on supporting girls in developing the skills they will need and getting opportunities to become successful and confident adults. And today we are seeing progress in girls' math and science scores, and increasing numbers going to college and participating in athletic programs. So, what do girls still need? What has changed and what still needs attention?

In this professional development seminar, we will examine the current research on the socialization of girls, which still supports a predominant focus toward others, emphasizing values of friendship, nurturing, understanding emotions, being pleasing and cultivating beauty. We will watch and integrate the videotape,

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Reviving Ophelia, (described below) into our discussions. We will focus on ways to support girls in getting all the skills they need to grow up whole, by also developing their public assertive selves, claiming their intelligence, and developing a hardy personality.

Raising Real Men: A New Look At Boys' Development

There is much attention in the popular literature and media today, about how we raise and educate boys in our society. It is a welcome addition to our public conversations about gender equity. Traditional definitions of masculinity give boys only half of the skills and opportunities they will need to grow into healthy adulthood. Boys, as a group, get more support in becoming competitive, independent, achieving great things in the world, and in developing their public assertive selves. The loss for boys is that they are discouraged from understanding and expressing emotions and appreciating deep connections. As a culture we are shortchanging boys by not supporting the relational side of their development.

In this professional development seminar, we will examine definitions of masculinity and what the boy culture teaches. We will watch and integrate the videotape, *Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity*, (described below) into our discussions. We will introduce the exciting and groundbreaking theoretical and applied work being done at Wellesley College to support the raising of relational boys. The work of other researchers on boys' development will be integrated as we identify new strategies to support boys in growing up whole.

Mothers and Daughters: Body Image and Self-Esteem

Are you concerned about all the media messages your middle school daughter is getting about being more beautiful, dieting to be thinner and leading with her sexuality?

Women have long been told that the keys to femininity are to cultivate beauty and sex appeal. And girls today are bombarded with even more unhealthy and damaging messages that what is most important about them is not what's inside but rather how they look… and they must be thinner, prettier and sexier.

This workshop is for mothers AND their middle school aged daughters. Join us for pizza and salad, great discussion and fun activities about healthy body image and self-esteem in middle school girls. We will explore ways to create healthier and more supportive environments for mothers and daughters alike to feel good and strong and healthy in their bodies… And we will celebrate all the other wonderful parts of who we are, as well!

Strengthening Voice

A two-day retreat with three follow-up work sessions for women, Strengthening Voice creates a space for women to do the internal work necessary to effectively advocate for the development of whole children. Participants seek a deeper understanding of their power as women through connecting with their inner wisdom and deep knowing, learning to speak from this wisdom, understanding the potency and effect of their action on others, and practicing the choice to make their voice public or not.

Understanding Gender Differences: Classroom Strategies and Activities to Raise Awareness

In classrooms, gender can be considered the "hidden curriculum". It affects everything that goes on but is rarely discussed. In this professional development seminar, we will examine gender issues in the classroom and will consider the question: How can both boys and girls be empowered in schools to get their needs met and to support each other's growth?

If we want to create environments that are truly empowering to the growth and learning of both girls and boys, we need to understand the differences in their relational worlds. Likewise, they need to understand each other. Beginning with Bergman and Surrey's "Gender Dialogue" we will explore tools and activities to increase awareness of gender differences and develop mutual empathy.

Participants are invited to bring activities and resources they have found helpful.

Video and Discussion Programs:

Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls

Join us to watch and discuss this illustrated, 1998 interview with Mary Pipher, PhD, author of the best selling book of the same title. In the 35-minute video, produced by the Media Education Foundation, Dr. Pipher discusses the challenges facing today's teenagers, especially girls, as well as the role of media and popular culture in shaping their identities. She offers concrete ideas for girls and boys, families, teachers, and schools to help girls free themselves from the toxic influences of today's media saturated culture. This session will be an opportunity to discuss some of the research on girls development and girls' self-esteem issues. It will also be an introduction to the resources available from Extension on gender socialization and equity issues of both girls and boys.

Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity

While our cultural definition of femininity has been widely examined, the dominant role of masculinity has until recently remained largely invisible. ***Tough Guise,*** featuring Jackson Katz, is a 1999 video, produced by the Media Education Foundation, that examines the relationship between images of popular culture and the social construction of masculine identities today. In this analysis, Katz argues that the widespread violence in American society needs to be understood as part of an ongoing crisis in masculinity. The nature of this crisis, which touches the lives of all of us, from all racial and socioeconomic groups, becomes clear when one examines some of the dominant images of masculinity today. The problem is not simply violence in the media, sports or video games- it is the accelerating construction of violent masculinity as a cultural norm. ***Tough Guise***, extensively illustrated with examples from popular culture, promises to both enlighten and challenges us all, male and female alike, to evaluate our own participation in the culture of contemporary masculinity. Join us to watch and discuss this 57 minute video geared toward high school and college students, and adults. This session will also be an opportunity to explore some of the current research and resources available from the Extension Office on gender socialization and equity issues.

Killing Us Softly III: Advertising's Image of Women

Does the beauty ideal still tyrannize women? Are young girls still sexualized and grown women infantalized? Are images of male violence against women still used to sell products? Jean Kilbourne's pioneering work, helped develop and popularize the study of gender representation in advertising. Her award winning films *Killing us Softly* (1979), and *Still Killing Us Softly (*1987) have influenced millions of college and high school students across two generations and internationally. In this important 1999 update, produced by the Media Education Foundation, she reviews if and how the image of women in advertising has changed over the last 20 years. With wit and warmth, Kilbourne uses over 160 ads and commercials to critique advertising's image of women. By fostering creative and productive dialogue, she

invites viewers to look at familiar images in a new way, that moves and empowers us to take action. Join us to watch and discuss this 35 minute video.

Teen Sexuality in a Culture of Confusion

In this 40 minute film, produced in 2000, by the Media Education Foundation, young people tell their own stories about the modern forces surrounding their decisions about sex, friends, family, alcohol, homophobia and AIDS. The young people in the film believe that open talk can save lives and when peers talk young people listen.

What A Girl Wants

In 2000, eleven girls ages 8 to 16 from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and two classrooms of middle and high school were interviewed about their views on media culture and its impact on their lives. Their insightful and provocative responses provide the central theme of the film, a half-hour examination of how the media present girls. Juxtaposing footage culled from a typical week of TV broadcasting with original interviews, *What a Girl Wants* will provoke debate and, ideally, act as a catalyst for change in media content. 10-01

Appendix B: Gender Project Evaluation Activities February 2001 – February 2002

Activity	Dates
Monthly Evaluation Meetings – Christine Burgess and Desi Larson	(4/6/01, 5/14/01, 6/13/01, 6/27/01, 8/14/01, 9/11/01, 10/9/01, 11/20/01, 1/28/02, 2/11/02)
Evaluation Design	February – March 2001
Survey and Interview Design	April – May 2001
Mail Survey	May 2001
Telephone Interviews	June-July 2001
Focus Group Interview	October 2001
UMCE Email Survey	October 2001
Data Analysis	June – December 2001
Report Writing	January 2002 – February 2002
Final Report	February 2002

Appendix C: Cover Letter and Mail Survey

York County
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Sanford, ME 04073
(207) 324-2814, 1-800-287-1535
FAX: (207)324-0817
Email: afortune@umext.maine.edu

The Gender Project

May, 2001

Dear Gender Project Participant,

The Gender Project has been a growing part of the educational programming of the York County Extension Office since 1995. We are pausing this spring to reflect on what we have accomplished. We do this for two reasons: first, to be accountable to our program funding sources, and second, to gather information to move forward most effectively.

You have been connected with our work in a number of possible ways. Perhaps you attended one of our workshops or organized one in your community. Perhaps you requested support to lead a gender workshop, or simply asked to be on our mailing list to learn more. In any case, you are a part of the Gender Porject and your perspective and experience with us is important.

We would greatly appreciate you taking a few minutes to complete the enclosed survey and return it to us by June 8 in the enclosed postage paid envelope.

Your survey will be treated confidentially. We have coded your envelope so that we can send you a small appreciation gift after you return the survey. We will also be reserving the names of respondents for a drawing for several additional surprise gifts.

Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up telephone conversation to discuss your responses or share experiences or stories in more detail? Please indicate this on the enclosed postcard. The postcard contains other important information about renewing your free subsciption to The Gender Project News as well. Please note that you will be dropped from the mailing list if you do not respond.

You are very important to the success of this evaluation study. Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions please don't hesitiate to call.

Sincerely,

Aileen M. Fortune
Associate Extension Professor

Christine Burgess
Community Educator

The Gender Project

Please check all that apply; I am:

Male	Parent/foster parent
Female	Professional
❑ Volunteer	Youth (up to 19 years)

Please check all appropriate boxes to show us how you have connected with the Gender Project.

- ❑ I borrowed resources and films from the Fender Project
- ❑ I have invited Gender Project staff to do a program in my community
- ❑ I consulted with Gender Project staff to design a program in my community
- ❑ I receive the Gender Project News
- ❑ I have shared resources with others.
  - How?
  - With how many people?

I have attended the following workshops:

- ❑ Tough Guise video/discussion
- ❑ Reviving Ophelia video/discussion
- ❑ Mother/Daughter Body Image workshop
- ❑ Raising Relational Boys
- ❑ Strengthening Voice Workshop
- ❑ Heroes, Growing Up Female & Strong
- ❑ Boy's Night Out (Eliot, ME)
- ❑ Gender Strategies in the Classroom
- ❑ Killing Us Softly III video/discussion
- ❑ Supporting Girls to be Smart, Strong, and Confident
- ❑ Gender Socialization and Equity Issues
- ❑ The Gender Dialogue

The two most important things I have learned are:

As a result of participating in Gender Project Activities, I.....

What recommendations do you have for the future of the Gender Project?

Thank you for your help, please return survey by June 8, 2001.

Appendix D: Gender Project Telephone Interview Guide

Date:_____ **Respondent Code:**_____

Comments:_____

---

1. What have your learned from your experience with the Gender Project at a personal level?

2. What have you learned from your experience on a professional level?

3. What have you learned from your experience that you have brought to your community?

4. What barriers have you come up against?

5. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the Gender Project?

Appendix E: UMCE E-mail Survey Questions

Date:_____ **Respondent Code:**_____

Comments:_____

---

1. What is your position with UMCE? County?

2. How have your been involved with the Gender Project? (a list of participation in workshops and events is fine)

3. How have you integrated Gender Project workshops or information into your UMCE work?

4. What have you learned from your experience?

   - On a personal level
   - On a professional level
   - Within your community
   - What have you noticed as a result of applying your gender awareness?

5. What barriers have you come up against?

Appendix F: Focus Group Interview Guide

Date:_____ **Site:**_____

Comments:_____

Description of Group:_____

---

1. What awareness was awakened by the Strengthening Voice workshop?

2. What have you noticed as a result of that awareness on a personal, professional, and community level?

3. What barriers have you come up against?

4. What kind of support do you need for the future?

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